4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
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for consumption. This division of labour runs through the whole of Tale domestic economy and is equally well evinced, e.g. in the organization of house-building and repairing. Boys and girls, too, have their duties in connexion with the care of the live stock and in the house.

The head of such a self-supporting unit has his own granary or granaries. Just as he is the final arbiter in agricultural matters, so he alone controls the distribution to the women of the grain jointly produced. In theory he could even sell the grain if he wished without consulting the men dependent on him; in practice, he dare not do so, for they would leave the compound at the first opportunity.

The entire unit of food economy thus draws its main supply of grain, the staple foodstuff, from a common source. But every household, every primary family, and indeed every individual other than young children has a degree of economic independence which is limited only by the obligations to the bigger unit. An industrious householder usually possesses some poultry and perhaps sheep and goats of his own, supplies a good deal of the minor crops consumed by his own wives and children, and even some grain to augment his wives' rations from the main store. Every woman, again, adds to the food supply of her primary family by her own efforts. If she is a market trader or a potteress, for example, she will have money of her own, will sometimes purchase extra foodstuffs and may invest in live stock which will eventually go to her sons. Her husband has no powers of disposal over her property. If he uses any of it, by her permission, it is a debt which must be repaid.

DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURE AND CROPS. This system can best be understood in relation to Tale agriculture. The staple crop is millet (generically, *ki*) of which there are three kinds, early millet (*naara: pennisetum typhoideum*); guinea-corn (*ki* specifically, each variety being known by a special term, e.g. *kutɔk*, *kazii* &c.: *sorghum vulgare*); and late millet (*za: pennisetum spicatum*). These with a small amount of rice (*mui: oryza sativa*) occupy 92 per cent. of the area cultivated in the Zuarungu district.[1] The seasonal

[1] According to Mr. Lynn, who reports observations on 29 compounds in Zuarungu district, five being in Tale settlements. Four were somewhat larger and

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
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variations in the ripening of crops makes it essential, as will be clear later, for a self-supporting unit to have a supply of every type of cereal, or face starvation at certain times of the year. Early millet is grown only on the compound farms (*saman*), land immediately surrounding the compounds and kept fertile by human and animal manure and by spreading the detritus of the kitchen midden. The compound farms at the disposal of a joint family consist of irregular patches of greatly varying size scattered throughout the area of settlement of their lineage. They are acquired by inheritance, succession, or gift from the head of one's joint family or lineage. How much of it a man has depends, thus, upon his seniority within the joint family and the lineage. The head of a joint family may cultivate 6 or 8 acres of compound farm; his younger brother and prospective heir, as head of an independent unit of food economy, may have only two acres or less allotted to him.[1] The compound farm is so precious that it is regarded as sacrilege to sell or abandon it.

Guinea-corn or late millet, which ripen several months after the early millet, are grown both on compound farms and on bush farms (*poog*) from one to four miles distant from the settlements of those who cultivate them. Bush farms also descend in the line of inheritance; but they can be bought or borrowed for a term of years. If the bush land belonging to his own joint family is limited, a man can always borrow as much as he requires. A head of a joint family may require no bush farm at all if he has a large compound farm; junior men, on the other hand, depend the more upon their bush farms the less compound land they have.[2] Compound land is the most fertile and most easily worked owing to its proximity. Those who have large compound farms (e.g. elders) are less liable to food shortage than those who have mainly bush farms (i.e. younger men).

richer than the average Tale compound, as they belonged to headmen or elders. Botanical names are taken from Mr. Lynn's report.

[1] Rough calculations based on a survey of farms made for us by Mr. D. S. Commey. Mr. Lynn's records show that the Tale compound farms he measured vary from nearly 7 acres to under an acre; the average being 3·36 acres.

[2] Mr. Lynn found bush farms to vary from about 5 to 10 acres in extent. How much bush farm is cultivated depends, of course, upon the number of men co-operating and upon the food requirements of the unit, as well as upon the amount of *saman* they have.

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Most compounds also have at their disposal some low-lying alluvial land, (*boog*, valley) suitable for millet or rice. Junior members take up as much as they wish of this, provided it is not required by the head of the compound.

Reference to the table given previously shows that, on an average, a single unit of food economy is dependent upon the labour of two men and comprises 1·4 households[1] and two primary families. The head of the unit of food economy is entitled to as much assistance as is necessary for the cultivation and harvesting of his compound farms from the junior men, his brothers, sons or nephews belonging to that unit, and to the help of all the women of the unit in sowing and harvesting. He is responsible for the supply of seed, for most of the implements, and he stores the grain in his granaries. In return, all who help him are entitled to share in the produce.

Boys and unmarried young men, dependent upon the wives of the head for cooked food, always assist him in the cultivation of his valley and bush lands. A junior householder need not. If he is ambitious, industrious, or merely planning for the day when he can break away from the control of the head, he cultivates his own bush farm. He supplies his own seed and the produce is his to dispose of as he pleases. Even an adolescent boy may be given a small plot (*sinsiar*) on his father's compound farm to cultivate, the produce of which is absolutely his own. This is one of the ways in which a boy acquires a few chickens and lays the foundations for the economic independence which he gradually reaches in the course of years. Every independent cultivator thus augments the food supply of his own household or family, but not of the whole unit.

This differentiation is even more marked with subsidiary crops, of which the most important is ground-nuts (*sukpaam: arachis hypogea*). The head of a self-supporting unit interplants ground-nuts with his early millet on the compound farm. The crop yielded is his property, though any member of the unit can help himself to some for food. But, in addition, almost every man and boy able to wield a hoe and most adult women have their own ground-nut fields (*sukpalay*). These are made on patches of compound land unsuitable for other crops and

[1] Actually 50 per cent. (28 out of 58) units of food economy have two or more households.

[See cat. 116, p.241 — Analyst.]

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11



compared with its neighbours, in respect to those components of its culture connected with its craft. Only sons of that lineage may be taught the craft of the smith; and even those who through lack of inclination or ability do not learn it share the ideology associated with it and submit to ritual and moral constraints in virtue of this. Because of their traditional craft the men of Sakpee do not eat the hedgehog until they have successfully made a piece of ironwork; and when they were driven from the Tong Hills, abandoned their homes and property but carried with them the sacred anvils. Similarly, the social sphere of the Hill Tallis contrasts in many respects with that of their Namoo neighbours on account of their different ritual systems.

Yet it is necessary to note that these differences do not detract from the essential homogeneity of the social sphere for all the Tallensi. They are differences in the substance of some cultural definitions, not in the forms and functions of institutions. The totemic taboos of the Hill Tallis are exactly paralleled by the prohibitions of first-born children eating the domestic fowl among the Namoos. What their sacred groves and initiation rites mean to the former, their first ancestor, sacred drums, and the chiefship mean to the latter. The psychological substratum of social behaviour is the same in both groups and in their associated clans, with a sole exception. The initiation cult of the Hill Tallis does give a bias to their ideology and so to their social sphere which the Namoos lack.[1] In our present inquiry these differences may be neglected since the dynamic relationships of the individual to his community are the same everywhere in Taleland. Whether a child is trained as a blacksmith or as a farmer, and whether he is inducted into the ritual and ideology of the ancestor cult alone, or into that of the sacred groves as well, the principles are the same.

This background will be continuously discerned in our study of Tale education. But a few clinching observations may be cited here to show that the child is not merely a supernumerary element of his society but thinks and feels himself to be a part of it.

1. I was walking with Samane and his two small sons (8–9 years)[2]

[1] See M. Fortes, 'Ritual Festivals and Social Cohesion in the Hinterland of the Gold Coast', *American Anthropologist*, vol. xxxviii, no. 4.

[2] All ages are estimated, but the probable error of such an estimate is at least 12 months.

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11



across a recently sown field of early millet already a few inches high. I chanced to tread on a shoot. Immediately one of the small boys stooped and carefully raised and replanted the blade of millet. 'Why did you do that?' I asked. 'Don't you know that is our food?' he replied reproachfully.

2. Every small boy of 6–7 years and upwards has a passionate desire to own a hen, and many of them are able to realize this ambition. If you ask a small boy why he wants a hen he will reply in almost the same words as an adult uses to explain the importance of 'things' (*bon*). 'If you have a hen it lays eggs, and you take the eggs and breed chicks, then you can sell the chickens and buy a goat, and when the goat breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a sheep, and when the sheep breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a cow, and then you can take the cow and get a wife.'

3. Maanyeya, a little girl of about 9–10 years, said that she had eaten none of the meat of last night's sacrifice. 'Why?' I asked. 'When they sacrifice to Zukɔk', she explained gravely, 'women don't eat of the meat. If they do, they will never bear any children, they become sterile.' 'What's that to you?' I said. 'Am I not a woman? Who wants to be sterile?' she responded almost indignantly.

4. I was playing with Tarɔmba and Yindubil (8–9 years), sons of the same joint family, and their friends. We were discussing parents. Tarɔmba and Yindubil, speaking together, told me the story of the latter's mother. Three or four years ago she had run away from their father to marry another man. They said, in the very words that an adult member of the family would use, speaking seriously: 'She ran away and took our belly [that is, she was pregnant by their father] and went and bore over there, so our child is there. Then she bore another child there. When our child is big enough we will separate it [*polg*—the technical legal term] and bring it home.' These two were thus identifying themselves completely with the family, mother–child attachments notwithstanding.

Such examples could be multiplied tenfold, but they will suffice at this stage.

*The adult attitude about education.* Education is not an entirely unwitting process among the Tallensi. They set a high, and indeed overdetermined, value on their culture, and are fully aware of the fact that

7:Lynn G-5 (1932-1936) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11



412 mounted on a similar handle. Hoe-blades are now made from scrap iron, mainly parts of old motor cars and old railway sleepers; [177] a hoe is sold in the market for 2d. or 3d., which is well within the purchasing power of everyone. It is not many years, however, [326] since hoes were made from locally smelted iron; they were then not so easy to come by and some of the poorer farmers used hoes of hard wood.

241 The coarse nature of the soil enables a shallow cultivation to be given effectively with the light implements after a fall of rain. 134 When the ground is dry and hard, cultivation is very laborious and it is frequently neglected at a time when needed most. This is often the case early in the season when precarious rains make a soil-mulch desirable.

*Preparation for Planting.*

●243 Two of the most important crops, early millet and guinea corn, are sown after the second big rain of the year, this is generally in the first week of April. The soil, which has been left untilled since the burn-over after the previous year's harvest, is very hard until humidity rises with the approaching rain, and there is very little time to do any preliminary cultivation. On the majority of farms the only preparation for sowing is to collect the remains of the previous season's crops into heaps and to burn, and sometimes to carry-out manure; very occasionally a little hoeing is done.

*Planting Major Crops.*

412 On the morning following the big planting rain the whole countryside turns out to do one of its few really full day's work 241 on the farm for the year. Men walk over the farm with stout sticks about 6′ long, cut from "tcheea" (Nankani) (Anoegeissus leiocarpus), or "gopelaga" (Nankani) (Acacia sieberriana), sharpened at the end to a flat point, resembling a narrow-bladed oar; or sometimes fitted with a worn hoe blade. With these sticks, holes are prodded at random 2′ 6″ to 3′ apart in the moist earth; 241 the soil being ejected with a twist of the wrists. Women and children follow the men with the seed of early millet and cowpeas mixed in a calabash. The calabash is held in the hand between the third and fourth fingers, and three to six seeds of early millet,

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241 inches of soil. Because of the haphazard method of planting, great care has to be exercised not to damage the young plants. The work is tedious; and the grain stores at this season of the year are [461] at their lowest (9); seldom is a man prepared to work for more than two or three hours at a time, and the maximum area cultivated in a day is about $\frac{1}{10}$th acre. Hoeing is started near to the compound and works outward; by the time the bush farm is reached the crops there are almost choked with weeds, and commonly they receive a set-back in their early stages from which they never [476] recover. A farmer fortunate enough to have a good supply of grain may call his neighbours to assist with hoeing, in exchange [273] for food and "dam" (Nankani), the local guinea corn beer. Or farmers may take turn about to work on each others' farms. In a few cases labour is hired and paid money wages.

• 243 On land where early millet is planted it is usual to give three hoeings; two before harvesting early millet, and a final one to earth-up the late cereal afterwards. Land planted with a single cereal, guinea corn or late millet, is generally hoed only twice; or, in the case of some bush farms on the hills, once only.

*Harvesting, Methods and Times.*

241 Early millet is the first crop to be harvested, at the end of June or beginning of July, having occupied the ground for about 243 80 days. When mature, this crop is from 5 to 7 feet high; at this stage the interplanted late cereal is 3 to 4 feet high, and ground-crops are beginning to make a cover. It is common to pluck a few heads "green" for immediate consumption, but the grain is allowed to harden before the main harvest. During this period birds become a serious pest; children spend the day scaring them and women carry rattles, made from pieces of broken pottery threaded on to a thin stick.

The heads of millet are cut off at the neck by men using short knives, and women carry the crop in baskets to the compound to [242] dry. The best heads are selected for seed; second grade heads are stored, unthreshed, in a granary (see diagram by Muir and Williams (4)) and threshed as required for use. Poor heads—"konkoni" (Nankani)—are boiled, threshed, and stored in pots; this grain is used for thickening soups. When all the early millet 252 heads have been gathered, women pull up the remains of the plants and transport them to a flat rock, where they burn them slowly to obtain the ash, which is carefully collected in pots. The ash